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Message Text

SECRET

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44
ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W
---------- 021583
R 171147Z AUG 76
FM AMEMBASSY DOHA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1740
INFO AMEMBASSY MANAMA
AMEMBASSY MUSCAT
AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI
AMEMBASSY KUWAIT
AMEMBASSY JIDDA
AMEMBASSY TEHERAN
AMEMBASSY SANA
AMEMBASSY LONDON
USINT BAGHDAD

S E C R E T DOHA 0862

EXDIS

DEPT FOR NEA/ARP

E.O. 11652 GDS
TAGS: MASS, PFOR, QA, US
SUBJ: QATARI INTEREST IN INFORMATION ON F-5S

REF: 75 DOHA 536, 75 DOHA 698, 75 DOHA 910, 75 STATE 164134

1. DURING AUGUST 16 CONVERSATION WITH AMBASSADOR, QATARI ARMED FORCES COMMANDER IN CHIEF SHAYKH HAMAD BIN KHALIFA AL THANI, WHO IS ALSO AMIR'S SON, ASKED THAT WE PROVIDE HIM WITH TECHNICAL CATALOGS, BROUCHURES AND OTHER PRMOTIONAL MATERIAL AVAILBLE TO USG ON F-5 AIRCRAFT. HAMAD EMPHASIZED THAT THIS WAS INFORMAL REQUEST FOR INFORMATION ONLY AND THAT HE WOULD APPRECIATE RESPONSE "WITHIN 3 WEEKS".

2. HAMAD SAID THAT AS I PROBABLY KNEW, GOQ HAD BEEN SHOPPING FOR SIMETIME FOR FIGHTER AIRCRAFT TO REPLACE ITS AGING HAWKER HUNTERS. HE SAID THAT CONVERSATION ON SUBJECT WITH BRITISH HAD
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NOT BEEN SATISFACTORY, SINCE BRITISH "TOO COMMERCIAL" AND DID NOT

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OFFER ADEQUATE TRAINING FACILITIES FOR QATARI PILOTS. (COMMENT: TO BEST OF OUR KNOWLEDGE, LATEST BRITISH SALES EFFORT HERE HAS BEEN FOR JAGUAR. WE READ "TOO COMMERCIAL" TO MEAN TOO EXPENSIVE. END COMMENT) HAMAD SAID THAT SUCCESS OF F-5 PROGRAMS IN SAUDI ARABIA, IRAN AND MOROCCO HAD STIMULATED GOQ INTEREST AND THAY WERE THINKING IN TERMS OF "15 OR 16" PLANES. HE AGAIN LAID PARTICULAR STRESS ON IMPORTANT OF COORDINATE PILOT TRAINING.

3. HAMAD THEN ASKED ME FOR MY OPINION ON USG ATTITUDE RE F-5 PURCHASE REQUEST FROM GOQ. HE INDICATED QATARIS PREFER TO TALK FIRST TO USG RATHER THAN NORTHROP REP ON SUBJECT. I ASKED IF I WAS TO CONSIDER THIS QUERY AS OFFICIAL AND HE SAID NO, THAT HE WAS JUST TAKING A SOUNDING, AND REPEATED THAT AT THIS STAGE ALL HE WAS ASKING FOR WAS TECHNICAL INFORMATION. I TOOK OPPORTUNITY TO OUTLINE U.S. ARMS SALES POLICY FOR LOWER GULF, STRESSING U.S. OPPOSITION TO INTRODUCTION INTO AREA OF ANY SOPHISTICATED WEAPONS SYSTEM THAT COULD ESCALATE ARMS RACE. I ALSO NOTED STRONG CONGRESSIONAL SENTIMENT AGAINST U.S. ARMS SALES IN GENERAL AND IN GULF REGION IN PARTICULAR.

4. ACTION REQUESTED: WOULD APPRECIATE DEPT'S POUCHING ASAP AVAILALE UNCLASSIFIED TECHNICAL AND PROMOTIONAL MATERIALS ON F-5. WHEN I HAND THESE OVER TO HAMAD, I WILL MAKE IT CLEAR THAT IT REPRESENTS NO COMMITMENT OF ANY KIND TO SELL F-5S TO GOQ AND THAT ANY FORMAL REQUEST MUST BE TREATED SEPARATELY AND IN ACCORDANCE WITH SPECIFIC CRITERIA WHICH WOULD GIVERN U.S. DECISION ON MATTER.

5. COMMENT: REFTELS COVER HISTORY OF GOQ INTEREST IN F-5S. QATARIS ARE NOTORIOUSLY LONG SHOPPERS, BUT SEARCH FOR FIGHTER AIRCRAFT HAS BEEN GOING ON FOR SOME TIME AND THEY MAY BE REACHING POINT OF DECISION. AMIR HAS TOLD ME REPEATEDLY THAT HE SEE NO SENSE IN SPENDING LARGE SUMS ON MILITARY HARDWARE, ALTHOUGH HE MOST CERTAINLY MUST HAVE SANCTIONED F-5 INFORMATION REQUEST. AGAIN, THIS MAY BE ANOTHER EXTENSION OF SHOPPING EFFORT, BUT WE SHOULD BE DOING SOME THINKING IF SALE REQUEST EVENTUATES. SEPTEL WILL CONVEY SOME BRIEF THOUGHTS ON PROBLEM OF REQUESTS FROM LOWER GULF STATES FOR EXPANDED MILITARY RELATIONSHIP WITH US.
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